

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:
  - sending a first price of an item for sale from a processor to one or more clients over a network;
  - 5 receiving one or more orders for the item at the first price from one or more of the clients;
  - delivering the item to the clients that ordered the item at the first price;
  - pricing the item at a second price with the processor based at least on the orders at the first price; and
  - 10 sending the second price over the network to at least one of the clients.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the item includes music.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the item includes text.
- 15 4. The method of claim 1, where the item includes a video content.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the item includes a picture.
- 20 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the item includes software.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the item is selected from a group consisting of goods and services.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said pricing includes determining the second price based at least on quantity of the orders received for the item.

5           9. The method of claim 1, wherein said pricing includes:  
determining profit at the first price is at least equal to a best profit for previous price levels with the processor; and  
increasing the first price to the second price, wherein the second price is greater than the first price.

10           10. The method of claim 9, wherein said increasing includes setting the second price as a random percentage above the first price.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said pricing includes:  
15           determining profit at the first price is less than a best profit for previous price levels with the processor; and  
reducing the first price to the second price, wherein the second price is less than the first price.

20           12. The method of claim 11, wherein the second price is halfway between the first price and a best price at which the best profit for the previous price levels was obtained.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein said pricing includes:  
determining profit at the first price is less than a best profit for previous price  
levels with the processor;  
determining a difference between a best price at which the best profit for the  
previous price levels was obtained and the first price is less than a minimum limit; and  
5 setting the second price to a randomly adjusted price within a range about the  
best price.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the minimum limit is one-percent of  
10 the best price.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein said pricing includes determining with  
the processor the second price based on time between orders.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving one or more  
15 second orders for the item at the second price.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said pricing includes determining the  
second price based on time between the one or more orders at the first price and the  
20 one or more second orders at the second price.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said pricing includes determining an  
average time between orders.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said pricing includes:

determining the time between the one or more orders at the first price and the one or more second orders at the second price is less than the average time between

5 orders; and

increasing the first price to the second price, wherein the second price is greater than the first price.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein said pricing includes:

10 determining the time between the one or more orders at the first price and the one or more second orders at the second price is greater than the average time between orders; and

decreasing the first price to the second price, wherein the second price is less than the first price.

15

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the first price is an initial price.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising receiving the initial price from a supplier of the item over the network.

20

23. The method of claim 21, further comprising setting the initial price with the processor based on historical data for the item.

24. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving a minimum price for the item from a supplier of the item; and  
wherein said pricing includes setting the second price of the item to the  
minimum price for the item.

5

25. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
wherein the clients that ordered the item at the first price include a first client;  
and  
debiting at least the first price from an account of the first client with the  
processor.

10

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising:  
registering the first client;  
receiving one or more deposits from the first client; and  
crediting the deposits to the account of the first client with the processor before  
said debiting.

15

27. The method of claim 26, wherein said receiving the deposits includes  
receiving payment from the first client over the network.

20

28. The method of claim 27, wherein said receiving the deposits includes  
receiving payment through a third party.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein said delivering the item includes transmitting the item from the processor to the clients that ordered the item at the first price over the network.

5 30. The method of claim 1, wherein said delivering the item includes transmitting the item from a content supplier device for the item to the clients that ordered the item at the first price.

31. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
10 wherein the clients that ordered the item at the first price include a first client;  
wherein the network includes an institutional network operated by an institution and the first client is operatively coupled to the processor through the institutional network;  
identifying the first client as a member of the institution with the processor;  
15 and  
compensating the institution for the order of the item at the first price from the first client.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the institution includes an educational  
20 institution.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said compensating includes funding a scholarship at the educational institution.

34. The method of claim 33, further comprising registering the institution with the processor.

5 35. The method of claim 31, further comprising:  
receiving an identifier from the first client; and  
wherein said identifying includes matching the identifier from the first client with the institution.

10 36. The method of claim 35, wherein the identifier includes an email address.

37. The method of claim 35, wherein the identifier includes a network address.

15 38. The method of claim 1, wherein the network includes the Internet.

39. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the clients include a personal computer.

20 40. The method of claim 1, wherein said sending the first price includes encoding the first price into a web page.

41. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

wherein the clients that ordered the item at the first price include a first client;

registering the first client to create an account for the first client with the processor;

5 receiving a deposit from the first client over the network;

crediting the account of the first client for the deposit with the processor;

debiting at least the first price of the item from the account of the first client with the processor;

wherein said pricing includes determining the second price based at least on profit from the orders at the first price;

10 wherein said delivering the item includes transmitting the item from the processor to the first client over the network;

wherein the network includes an institutional network operated by an institution and the first client is operatively coupled to the processor through the

15 institutional network;

registering the institution with the processor;

receiving an identifier from the first client, wherein the identifier includes an email address;

identifying the first client as a member of the institution with the processor,

20 wherein said identifying includes matching the identifier from the first client with the institution;



compensating the institution for the order of the item at the first price from the first client; and

wherein the network further includes the Internet.

5           42.     The method of claim 1, wherein said delivering includes physically transporting the item to the client.

43.     An apparatus, comprising:

10     means for sending a first price of an item to one or more clients over a network;

          means for receiving one or more orders for the item at the first price from at least one of the clients over the network;

          means for delivering the item over the network to the clients that ordered the item at the first price in response to receipt of the orders at the first price;

15     means for pricing the item at a second price based at least on the orders received at the first price; and

          means for sending the second price over the network to one or more of the clients.

20           44.     The apparatus of claim 43, wherein said means for pricing the item includes:

          means for determining the second price based at least on quantity of orders received for the item.

45. The apparatus of claim 43, wherein said means for pricing the item includes:

means for determining the second price based at least on time between orders.

5

46. The apparatus of claim 43, further comprising:

means for identifying one or more of the clients that ordered the item at the first price as members of an institution; and

means for rewarding the institution based on the orders received from the members.

10

47. The apparatus of claim 43, further comprising:

means for receiving compensation from the clients that ordered the item at the first price.

15

48. The apparatus of claim 43, further comprising:

means for compensating a supplier of the item for the orders received for the item.

20

49. The apparatus of claim 43, wherein the item includes music.

50. The apparatus of claim 43, further comprising the network.

51. An apparatus, comprising:

a computer readable device encoded with a program executable by a computer,  
said program being executable to send a first price of an item for sale to one or more  
clients over a network, said program being further executable to receive one or more  
5 orders for the item at the first price from at least one of the clients, said program being  
further executable to price the item at a second price based on the orders received at  
the first price, said program being further executable to send the second price of the  
item to one or more of the clients over the network.

10 52. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein said program being further  
executable to determine the second price based at least on quantity of orders received  
for the item.

53. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein said program being further  
15 executable to determine the second price based at least on time between orders.

54. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein:  
said program being further executable to identify one or more of the clients  
that ordered the item at the first price as members of an institution; and  
20 said program being further executable to compensate the institution based on  
the orders received from the members.

55. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein said program being further executable to receive payment from the clients that ordered the item at the first price.

56. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein said program being further  
5 executable to compensate a supplier of the item for the orders received for the item.

57. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the item includes one or more songs.

10 58. An apparatus, comprising:  
memory containing at least one item;  
a processor operatively coupled to said memory and responsive to input over a network from one or more clients, said processor being operable to dynamically adjust pricing of the item, said processor being operable to deliver the item from memory to  
15 the clients that order the item at a dynamically adjusted price.

59. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein said processor is operable to adjust the pricing of the item based at least on demand for the item.

20 60. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein said processor is operable to adjust the pricing of the item by comparing profits generated by the item at different price levels.

61. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein said processor is operable to increase the pricing of the item when profit at a current price for the item is at least greater than a previous best profit for the item.

5 62. The apparatus of claim 61, wherein said processor is operable to increase the pricing of the item when the profit at the current price is at least equal to the previous best profit for the item.

63. The apparatus of claim 62, wherein said processor is operable to  
10 increase the pricing of the item by a random percentage above the current price.

64. The apparatus of claim 63, wherein the random percentage is within a specified range.

15 65. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein said processor is operable to increase the pricing of the item by a random percentage above the current price.

66. The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the random percentage is within a specified range.

20

67. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein said processor is operable to decrease the pricing of the item when profit at a current price for the item is less than a previous best profit at a previous best price for the item.

68. The apparatus of claim 67, wherein said processor is operable to decrease pricing of the item to halfway between the current price and the best price.

5 69. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein said processor is operable to randomly adjust the pricing of the item around a best price at which a best profit for the item was previously obtained when there is a small price difference between the current price and the best price.

10 70. The apparatus of claim 69, wherein said processor is operable to randomly adjust the pricing within a specified range around the best price.

71. The apparatus of claim 69, wherein the small price difference is one-percent of the best price.

15

72. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein said processor is operable to adjust the pricing on a periodic basis.

73. The apparatus of claim 72, wherein said processor is operable to adjust  
20 the pricing at fixed intervals.

74. The apparatus of claim 72, wherein said processor is operable to adjust the pricing at variable intervals.

75. The apparatus of claim 72, wherein said processor is operable to adjust the pricing of the item by comparing profits generated by the item at different price levels.

5

76. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein said processor is operable to adjust the pricing of the item based on time between purchases of the item.

77. The apparatus of claim 76, wherein said processor is operable to increase the pricing of the item when the time between purchases decreases.

10

78. The apparatus of claim 76, wherein said processor is operable to decrease the pricing of the item when the time between purchases increases.

15

79. The apparatus of claim 58, further comprising:  
a supplier device operatively coupled to said processor, wherein at least a portion of said memory containing the item is located on said supplier device; and  
wherein said processor is operable to facilitate peer to peer transfer of the item from said supplier device to the clients that order the item.

20

80. The apparatus of claim 58, further comprising a dynamic pricing system that incorporates said processor.

81. The apparatus of claim 80, wherein said dynamic pricing system includes:

one or more database servers including one or more databases that contain information about the item;

5 one or more navigation servers operatively coupled to said database servers;

at least one connection server operatively couple to said navigation servers, said connection server being operable to direct requests from the clients to the navigation servers; and

10 a load balancing server operatively coupled to said connection server, said navigation servers and said database servers, said load balancing server being operable to facilitate load balancing on said connection server, said navigation servers and said database servers.

82. The apparatus of claim 81, further comprising one or more file servers  
15 in which the item is stored, said file servers being operatively coupled to said navigation servers and said database servers.

83. The apparatus of claim 82, wherein said file servers are incorporated into said dynamic pricing system.



84. The apparatus of claim 82, further comprising:

one or more supplier devices operatively coupled to said dynamic pricing system over the network; and

5 wherein at least one of said file servers includes at least one of said supplier devices.

85. The apparatus of claim 82, wherein said file servers include:

a home file server on which the item is stored;

10 a second file server operatively coupled to said home file server; and

wherein said home file server is operable to transfer a copy of the item to said second file server when demand for the item is high, said home file server being operable to remove the copy of the item from said second file server when demand for the item is low.

15

86. The apparatus of claim 82, wherein said file servers are organized by content type.

87. The apparatus of claim 81, wherein:

20 the information on said database servers includes the pricing of the item; and said database servers are operable to adjust the pricing of the item by comparing profits generated by the item at different price levels.

88. The apparatus of claim 81, wherein:

the information on said database servers includes the pricing of the item; and

said database servers are operable to adjust the pricing of the item based on time between purchases of the item.

5

89. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein:

said processor is operable to identify one or more of the clients that order the item as members of an institution; and

said processor is operable to compensate the institution based on the orders received from the members.

10

90. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein said memory includes a plurality of file servers, said file servers including:

a home file server on which the item is stored;

a second file server operatively coupled to said home file server; and

15

wherein said home file server is operable to transfer a copy of the item to said second file server when demand for the item is high, said home file server being operable to remove the copy of the item from said second file server when demand for the item is low.

91. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein:

said processor is operable to receive the item from a content supplier over the network; and

5       said processor is operable to compensate the content supplier for purchases of the item.

92. The apparatus of claim 58, further comprising the network.

10       93. The apparatus of claim 92, wherein the network includes the Internet.

94. The apparatus of claim 58, further comprising the clients.

95. The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the item includes media content.

15

96. The apparatus of claim 95, wherein the media content includes music.

97. The apparatus of claim 58, further comprising:

wherein said processor is operable to increase the pricing of the item when  
20       profit at a current price for the item is at least greater than a previous best profit for the item;

wherein said processor is operable to increase the pricing of the item by a random percentage above the current price within a specified range when the profit at the current price is at least equal to the best profit for the item;

wherein said processor is operable to decrease the pricing of the item when the profit at the current price for the item is less than the best profit for the item; and

wherein said processor is operable to randomly adjust the pricing of the item around a best price at which the best profit for the item was previously obtained when there is a small price difference between the current price and the best price.

98. A method, comprising:

operating an institutional network operatively coupled to one or more clients, wherein the institutional network is operatively coupled to at least one server that supplies media content to the clients over the institutional network; and

receiving compensation for the media content supplied by the server to the clients over the institutional network.

99. The method of claim 98, further comprising supplying to the server an identifier that identifies the clients that are operatively coupled to the institutional network.

100. The method of claim 99, wherein the identifier includes at least a portion of an email address.

101. The method of claim 99, wherein the identifier includes a network address.

102. The method of claim 98, further comprising designating a recipient of  
5 the compensation.

103. The method of claim 102, wherein the recipient includes a scholarship.

104. The method of claim 98, wherein the media content includes music.  
10

105. The method of claim 98, wherein the institutional network is operated  
by an educational institution.

106. The method of claim 105, further comprising:  
15 supplying to the server an identifier that identifies the clients that are  
operatively coupled to the institutional network, wherein the identifier includes at least  
a portion of an email address;

designating a recipient of the compensation, wherein the recipient includes a  
scholarship; and

20 wherein the media content includes music.

107. An apparatus, comprising:

a computer readable device encoded with a program executable by a computer,  
said program being executable to identify one or more clients that purchase an item  
5 over an institutional network as members of an institution that operates the  
institutional network, said program being further executable to reward the institution  
based on the purchases of the members.

108. The apparatus of claim 107, wherein said program is further executable  
10 to reward the institution on a periodic basis.

109. The apparatus of claim 107, wherein said program is further executable  
to send reward compensation to an account designated by the institution.